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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on (1) the results of a 1984-85 national survey of the status of school administrator preparation, (2) recent literature in the field, and (3) where the field appears to (and should) be going. Participants in the survey included state certification officials, large public school district officials, and directors of doctoral degree programs in educational administration. Results show that (1) significant ongoing review, analysis, and change in the field of school administration is affecting standards for preparation, certification, and employment; (2) 49 of the 50 states have administrator certification standards; (3) the use of competencies and examinations is increasing, as well as requirements such as field experience, internship, and prior teaching experience; and (4) the major focus of current standards, requirements, and competencies is on management skills and legal and policy issues, rather than on foundational studies and instructional and curricular concerns. Much of the literature discusses generalized approaches to foundational study, infusion of values, categorization of skills and behaviors, and flexibility of application. Most preparation programs focus on procedural issues rather than on ethics and leadership issues, but a shift in priorities is underway. Future preparation programs need to improve instruction, field experience, evaluation procedures, and interagency coordination. (IW)

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WHERE ARE WE
AND WHERE ARE WE GOING
IN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR PREPARATION
IN THE UNITED STATES?

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Where are we and where are we going in school administrator preparation in the United States? We have a twofold response to this question, as well as some final afterthoughts. The first part of our response focuses on where we are in school administrator preparation in the United States based on results from a national survey which we conducted during the 1984-85 school year. The second part of our discussion concerns where the field appears to be going, based upon observations from both our survey results and from the recent literature in the field. We will then temper the presentation with a few afterthoughts oriented towards where we believe the preparation of school administrators should be headed.

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (67th, San Francisco, California, April 16-20, 1986).

THE SURVEY

We conducted the First Annual Survey of Certification and Employment Standards for Education Administrators during the 1984-85 school year to gather information on the status of requirements for preparation, certification, and employment of individuals in positions of educational administration in the public schools across the United States. It was our intention that such information be disseminated as widely as possible, and following our analysis of the data we sent reports to all agencies and institutions which participated in the project as well as to a variety of educational media. The survey was reported on in Education Week and an article discussing the data appeared in the Winter 1986 issue of Educational Horizons. We are conducting a Second Annual Survey this spring, and we intend to follow up with similar efforts in each subsequent academic year.

Structure of the Study

The survey instrument was prepared in three versions, specifically to address state certification officials, large public school district officials, and program directors at institutions of higher education which offer doctoral degrees in the field of educational administration. Each of the versions included questions concerning such items as: state certification for service as a public school administrator; required competencies for preparation, certification, and employment as a school administrator; the use of testing and examination in the preparation, certification, and employment of school administrators; the use of

performance assessment and requirements for field experience in the preparation, certification, and employment of school administrators; whether classroom teaching experience is required for preparation, certification, or employment as a school administrator; whether there are continuing education requirements for certified or employed school administrators; and the history of enactment and revision of standards for preparation, certification, and employment of school administrators, and the nature and direction of such changes in requirements.

Response to Study

In the fall of 1984 survey forms were sent to relevant officials who direct certification activities in state government in the 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, who coordinate personnel in the 32 large public school districts which comprise the Council of Greater City Schools, and who direct departments or programs of educational administration at 100 institutions of higher education which offer doctoral degrees in that field. Of the 100 institutions of higher education, 80 were public universities while 20 were private, and there was at least one from each state.

Completed responses were received from certification officials in 39 states (a 75% response), from personnel officials of 16 large public school districts (a 50% response), and from directors of graduate study programs at 52 institutions of higher education (a 52% response). Of the responses from higher education, 43 were from public universities and nine from private institutions, located in 33 different states. Of the total

of 107 responses (58% of the original intended sample) there was at least one from each of 46 states. The information collected is, therefore, widely reflected of preparation, certification, and employment activities in educational administration across the United States.

Certification

Each of the constituencies surveyed was asked whether there were state governmental standards for certification of school administrators in their states. Of the 39 state certification officials responding, all but one replied that they do have such standards for certification of school administrators. Of the 16 large school districts responding, all but one responded that their states have standards and procedures for certifying school administrators. In each case the negative responses were from the state of Michigan -- the Michigan Department of Education, the Detroit Public School District, Michigan State University, and Wayne State University. The combined responses from the three constituencies covered 46 states, and the Manual on Certification and Preparation of Educational Personnel in the United States published in late 1984 by the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education and Certification further confirms that Michigan is the only one of the 50 states which does not have certification requirements and procedures for school administrators.

Of the 38 other state officials responding to the survey, 35 report that their certification procedures differentiate between certification for superintendents and other central office administrators and school

building prinicipals and other site administrators. Specific responses indicated that 27 of the states have separate certification for superintendents or chief district administrators, that 19 states differentiate between elementary and secondary principals in their certification, and that a handful of states also certify such administrators as business officers and directors of certain types of academic programs separately.

Of the 50 institutions of higher education not located in Michigan which responded to the survey, 49 of them indicated they offer programs of study leading to state certification for school administration. The University of Hawaii reported that while it does not have a specific program leading to state certification, it does offer courses in support of state requirements for persons preparing to satisfy those certification standards. Among the institutions with programs of study in educational administration, 37 indicated that they have standards and requirements for their programs which exceed the state certification standards of their state. Of the 16 large public school districts participating in the survey, 13 reported that they have employment standards for administrators in their districts which exceed state certification requirements for administrators.

Competencies

Each of the three constituencies was asked if specific competencies are required for certification, employment, or preparation as school administrators. Of the 38 responding states which certify school

administrators, 16 replied that they specify competencies to be met for certification, 20 indicated that they do not have required competencies, and two stated that specific competencies were then under consideration. Twelve of the 16 large public school districts replied that they have required competencies were then under consideration. Twelve of the 16 large public school districts replied that they have required competencies to be met before employment as a school administrator in their district; the other four stated that they do not require demonstration of specific competencies. Of the institutions of higher education with graduate study programs for school administrators, 32 stated that they do have a list of required competencies to be met, 17 indicated that they do not, and three campuses did not offer a response to this question.

Examinations

Each of the three constituencies was asked if any form of examination or testing is used in evaluating candidates for certification, employment, or training in school administration. Eleven of the responding states answered that they do use an examination as part of the certification process, while 18 states said they do not. Of the 11, three report that they use the administration and supervision section of the National Teachers Examination battery, while the other eight use some form of examination developed by or for that specific state.

Of the 16 school districts, eight stated that they use an examination in evaluating candidates for employment as school administrators, while the other eight said they do not. Two of the districts use the NTE

examination, while the other six have locally developed and administered tests or interviews. Of the institutions of higher education engaged in preparation of school administrators, 36 indicated that they use some form of examination in addition to coursework and field experience requirements, while 15 stated that they do not use examinations is this way and one campus did not respond to this question.

Of those campuses using examinations of any sort, the most common one in use is the Graduate Record Examination, employed by 13 institutions. Eight campuses indicated they use the Miller Analogies Test, and in many other cases locally developed tests or interviews are used, or state examinations are required. Only two campuses stated that they use the NTE administrative examination. Sixteen of the institutions indicated that they use some form of comprehensive or qualifying written examination as part of their advanced degree program for school administrators, while four report requiring an oral examination upon completion of the program.

Performance Assessment and Field Experience

Each of the three constituencies was asked to describe the role played by performance assessment and field experiences in the certification, employment, and preparation of school administrators. Of the 39 states, certification officials reported that in six cases they require a performance assessment of candidates prior to certification and in 21 cases the state requires some form of field experience or internship. In the other 18 responding states there is not a specific field experience requirement for certification as a school administrator.

Of the 16 school districts, 10 require evidence of field experience or internship work prior to employment as school administrators, while the other six do not have such specific requirements. Of the 52 institutions of higher education, 43 have some field experience requirement as part of their training program for school administrators. The types of field experience vary from campus to campus, with 17 requiring internships and the others using some form of supervised field work.

Teaching Experience

Each of the three responding constituencies was also asked to indicate whether classroom teaching experience was required prior to certification, employment, or training in school administration. Of the state certification officials, 32 reported that their state requires teaching experience for certification as a school administrator, while seven indicated that they did not. Fourteen of the large public school districts reported that they require classroom teaching experience of applicants for employment as school administrators, while one district said teaching experience is required in some cases, the other responding district stated that it does not have such a requirement.

Of the institutions of higher education, 28 stated that classroom teaching experience was required for graduate study in school administration at their institution, while 24 indicated it was not. However, many of the 24 suggested that they encourage students of school administration to have classroom teaching experience, since it is often required for state certification and employment. The most common number

of years required by all three constituencies was three years of teaching -- by 20 states, six districts, and 15 campuses in the sample. The next most common length of teaching service required by states and institutions of higher education is two years, while six of the school districts require five years of teaching experience before application for an administrative position.

Continuing Education

Each of the three constituencies was asked if there are continuing education requirements relevant to certification, employment, or preparation as school administrators. Of the 39 states responding, certification officials in 21 reported that they have continuing education requirements for persons holding certification as school administrators in their state. The other 18 states indicated that they do not have any such continuing education requirements. The nature of the requirements in the 21 states range from graduate study, continuing education units, and clock hours of staff development, within a period of time from one to 10 years depending upon the state.

Twelve of the 16 large school districts also require some form of continuing education for all school administrators in their employment, while the other four do not. In most cases the requirements involve participation in staff development or continuing education programs coordinated by the district.

The institutions of higher education were asked whether they offer continuing education or staff development programs in the field of

educational administration in which their employed graduates can participate. Thirty-four of the 52 institutions stated that they do offer such programs.

Revision of Standards

All of the respondents to the survey in each of the three categories were asked to indicate the date when their current standards and procedures for certification, employment, or preparation of school administrators were enacted, when they were most recently revised, and whether any further revisions were currently under consideration, and if so of what nature or direction. Of the 39 state certification officials responding, 18 reported that their state standards had been revised at least once during the 1980s, and 24 stated that some further revisions were currently under consideration. Such discussions were described as involving a total review of certification procedures in some cases and just fine tuning of specific competencies, examinations, or assessment procedures in other instances.

Of the 16 large public school districts, 14 reported that their criteria and procedures for employment of school administrators had been revised at least once during the 1980s, and six of the districts stated that further revisions were under consideration. The nature of such considerations involve development of new standards for employment and creation of new performance assessment procedures.

Of the 52 institutions of higher education, 42 stated that their graduate study programs in school administration had undergone revision

during the 1980s, and 35 reported that further program review is currently underway. Many campuses indicated that they have a continual process of revision for such programs, involving evaluation of the program and its graduates, while others stated that they are currently responding to new state requirements, reviewing standards, considering new examinations to be used, raising required scores or competencies, adding field experience requirements, and considering such areas as multicultural education and law-related studies.

Although there appears to be no specific common thread to the considerations of the states, districts, and campuses, it is obvious that there is much activity with respect to updating and revising programs and procedures for certification, employment, and preparation of school administrators. Of the total sample of 107 respondents, 74 (or 69%) have undergone some form of revision of standards for school administrators during the current decade, and 65 (or 61%) are currently engaged in additional revision. It would be an understatement to suggest that the question of procedures and standards for the preparation, certification, and employment of public school administrators is a dynamic and volatile enterprise.

What Do We Know?

So what do we know, in summary, based on this survey effort? Six things stand out. First, there is significant ongoing review, analysis, and change in the field of school administration, impacting standards for preparation, certification, and employment. During this decade nearly all

of the agencies or institutions involved in our survey have either already revised their standards and procedures or are currently considering some form of revision. It is important to note, as well, that in all cases such revisions have been in the direction of upgrading, increasing, and making more stringent such standards. We have found no instances of standards being lowered for school administrators.

Second, 49 of the 50 states do have specific certification standards for school administrators. All of the colleges and universities involved in our study have some form of program or series of courses related to preparation for school administration. All of the school districts have criteria, standards, and expectations related to employment of school administrators. There appears to be no lack of expectations relative to the field.

Third, the specific use of competencies is growing. About half of the state agencies have specific competencies related to certification, about two-thirds of the institutions of higher education have competencies associated with their preparation programs, and some three-fourths of the large school districts use competencies in assessing potential school administrators for employment.

Fourth, the use of examinations is also increasing. At present only some one-fifth of the states employ examinations in the certification process, while about half of the school districts use examinations in assessing for employment. A wide variety of testing and examination procedures are used on the college campuses, with some three-fourths of the institutions requiring some specific examinations as part of their programs for school administrators.

Fifth, a wide variety of forms of field experience, internship, performance assessment, prior teaching experience, and staff development are associated with the preparation, certification, and employment of school administrators. Such additional requirements also are on the increase.

Sixth, the major focus of current standards, requirements, and competencies related to training, certification, and employment of school administrators appears to be on management skills and legal and policy issues, with less attention to foundational studies and instructional and curricular concerns. However, there is some initial evidence of a trend toward more attention to such basics, as well as to practical managerial issues.

THE LITERATURE

The question of where we are headed with respect to the preparation of educational administrators in the United States can be addressed by a review of the literature as well as by extrapolation of the findings from our survey. In our report published in Educational Horizons we stressed in particular the general lack of attention by state certification standards, school district employment criteria, and higher education programs to issues related to effective schooling. Few agency and institutional standards deal with questions of instructional efficiency, but instead stress managerial procedures almost exclusively. The purpose of effective management -- or the educational programs to be managed -- appear to be neglected in far too many cases (Jones, Gousha, and LoPresti, 1986).

A Focus on Administration

Late last year Dale Mann wrote in Education Week that the field of school administration appears to have been left out of the current national educational reform movement. He noted that of the state educational reforms enacted, 158 are aimed at teachers and another 132 target students, while only 19 relate to school administrators directly (Mann, 1985). It would appear, however, that this lack of emphasis on administration of schools is changing. Specific reform programs dealing with the preparation and employment of administrators are now underway in several states, frequently calling for a comprehensive review and updating of the field. For instance, in Maryland the state has charged a special commission with investigating the "role and function of school-based leadership personnel" and the "preparation programs" offered in that area (Hornbeck, 1985).

H. Thomas James, in discussing the past several decades in the field of school administration, notes a significant shift in school district power structures away from administrators and toward teachers. He argues that in order for superintendents and other administrators to counterbalance such changes, they must be more skilled as political negotiators and more understanding of the milieu in which they operate (James, 1982).

Edwin M. Bridges, in his extensive writings about educational administration, has similarly stressed that the nature of school leadership must involve understanding and management of conflict as well as the ability to control and use emotions (Bridges, 1975). Further,

Bridges has analyzed patterns of research in the field and concluded that too much attention has been given to the outcomes of administrative practice, as opposed to inputs -- there has not been adequate attention to what we wish to have achieved (Bridges, 1982).

In that same vein, Luvern L. Cunningham has suggested that school administration, or educational leadership, is best defined as the exercise of influence. Such a definition, however, calls for an understanding of what direction one wishes the schools to pursue, or otherwise the administrator does not know when and where to exercise influence (Cunningham, 1982). In his exploration of individuals in organizations, Daniel E. Griffiths draws much the same conclusion -- he suggests that simply defining the concept of an administrator's role is insufficient (Griffiths, 1977).

In two recent articles in the fall 1985 issue of Educational Administration Quarterly, Colin W. Evers and William D. Greenfield, Jr. have made extremely persuasive cases for the importance of ethics and morality in the preparation of educational administrators. Here again the argument is that administration for the sake of administration, without some explicit understanding of the direction, value, and importance of schooling, makes little sense. Evers urges that value analysis and logic analysis must play an equivalent role to understanding organizational theory and the practice of decision-making, in order that appropriate decisions can be made (Evers, 1985). Greenfield calls for the introduction of study of values and the humanities into the administrator training curricula (Greenfield, 1985).

Skills and Behaviors

With the increased attention to competencies, examinations, performance assessment, and field experiences much has appeared lately in the literature of educational administration concerning appropriate skills and behaviors for the field. Henry Mintzberg has proposed a division between skills involving interpersonal roles, informational roles, and decisional roles in management (Mintzberg, 1975). Jack Culbertson, Robin H. Farquhar, Alan K. Gaynor, and Mark R. Shibles earlier focused on certain behaviors of school leaders which they argued would be relatively stable through the life's work of such individuals -- such characteristics as courage, confidence, charisma, intelligence, commitment, tolerance, sensitivity, and energy (Culbertson et al, 1969).

Leonard L. Baird offers an orientation toward problem-solving skills, which he argues are general enough that they can be applied to all administrative fields (Baird, 1983). A similar broad application is suggested by Robert L. Katz, who proposes a "three-skill approach" stressing technical skill, human skill, and educational skill (Katz, 1974). Thomas J. Sergiovanni identifies five areas of leadership, overlapping with Katz's framework -- technical, human, educational, symbolic, and cultural (Sergiovanni, 1984). Nancy J. Pitner and Rodney T. Ogawa also focus on the importance of symbolic leadership for schools (Pitner and Ogawa, 1981). The fact that any such structures or approaches must be flexible and able to function within increasingly complex social systems is argued by Joseph F. Kauffman, 1984).

Application in Training

While much of the literature discusses generalized approaches to foundational study, infusion of values, categorization of skills and behaviors, and flexibility of application, there is everywhere concern about the actual implementation of school administrator training. At last year's meetings of the National Conference of Professors of Educational Administration David Erlandson and Ed Kelly discussed major features of the school principalship of the future, and suggested that preparation programs would need both a strong performance-based component and a personalized orientation (AASA Professor, 1985).

In describing the preparation program at the State University of New York at Buffalo, James A. Conway and Robert E. Jennings stress the importance of offering training which "provides depth in content, particularly in powers of analytic method" and in "flexibility to adapt to a variety of individual interests and social needs" (Conway and Jennings, 1981). David S. Seeley has also pointed out the advantages of offering preparation which is flexible enough to allow for recruiting of "outside" leaders, individuals for whom education has not necessarily been their previous career (Seeley, 1984).

In the main, the challenges which appear to face those engaged in the preparation of school administrators are fourfold. First, the role must be identified and defined, and agreement reached on the range and focus of the training. Second, those specific skills, abilities, competencies, and behaviors associated with the role must be isolated, and appropriate preparation implemented. Third, in response to the problem-solving

orientation advocated by many, it is important to determine just what the problems are which school administrators face, and how the solving of such problems can be addressed in the preparation program. And fourth, it is necessary to determine how best to fit into the preparation program the major components of foundational study, review of best practice, problem-solving activities, and field experience.

Afterthoughts

Given such survey results and opinions from the literature, it is our perception that the future of preparation programs for educational administrators in the United States must embrace seven basic concepts. First, such programs must contain a strong foundational component through which prospective school leaders gain a thorough understanding of the historical, philosophical, and social context of American education, and the ways in which such forces impact upon educational problems and decisions. This foundational study must also entertain questions of values, moral issues, and school purposes, so that the school administrator will be prepared to make decisions based upon educational commitment as well as management considerations.

Second, with the focus more and more on development of skills and behaviors which reflect an understanding of the interrelationship between cognitive aspects of the foundational study and performance required on the job, preparation programs for educational administrators must develop ways in which students receive both quality on-campus instruction and quality experiences in the field. Likely strong programs will consist of

approximately one-half of the time spent in the college classroom and the other half in clinical settings.

Third, if the preparation programs are to be of consistently high quality, attention must be given to more careful selection of those clinical settings and of the practitioners with whom the candidates serve. Since a major focus of the field experience is to model and practice effective administrative procedures, it is obvious that the quality of the assignments, the sites, and the master administrators with whom the candidates work is crucial.

Fourth, evaluative procedures of several sorts must be built into all preparation programs for educational administrators. Each candidate must be evaluated at stages throughout the program, to assure that he or she is initially qualified to enter the training process, is making adequate and expected progress throughout the program, and meets the ultimate criteria for graduation from the program. Such evaluation must occur both in the on-campus instructional setting and throughout the field experience components, and must involve both written examinations and performance assessments. In addition, there must be evaluation of the program itself, including regular reviews of the college faculty, the field experience supervisors, the cooperating school district personnel, and the clinical sites to assure that each segment of the program is of high quality.

Fifth, steps must be taken to improve coordination between preparation programs on the college and university campuses and state certification agencies. While the state has a traditional role in monitoring preparation and issuing certification, it is important that the expertise of the preparatory institutions not be overridden by a proliferation of

bureaucratic regulations. At the same time, the campuses must respect the growing interest of state government and political figures in the so-called "educational excellence" movement, and must be prepared to work with state political leaders and state departments of education in assuring the quality of preparation programs.

Sixth, as the pressures for educational reform move more directly into the educational administration arena, those involved in the preparation of educational administrators must be prepared to deal with some new questions. As has been the case with basic teacher education, there will be a strong push to reduce the number of institutions of higher education involved in such preparation, and each college or university program will be called upon to justify its existence. Further, there will be a similar pressure to allow training and certification through alternate routes. Just as there has been experimentation with the certification of liberal arts graduates as teachers without traditional pedagogical preparation, there will be initiatives designed to bring into school administration persons with business and public policy backgrounds but without traditional educational experience. It is our feeling that such alternatives must not be rejected simply because they are contrary to past practice, rather preparation programs must explore ways in which alternative routes to certification can be developed which meet the needs of the schools -- there must be standards for preparation and certification, standards which reflect both a strong foundational background and demonstrated performance in clinical settings, but such standards can and should be met in other than traditional ways.

Seventh, the profession must be involved in all of these questions, not in an isolated manner, not demanding that such issues are only professional issues to be handled in some mystical manner, but rather in a cooperative and involving way with all other interested parties. The future of professional preparation of school administrators will be determined by interaction among higher education faculty in that field, other segments of the college and university community, practicing administrators in the public schools, interested professional organizations, state departments of education, state elected officials, and interested segments of the general public. If the professional voice is to be heard, faculty members in educational administration must reach out to all of these other constituencies, identify the issues and concerns in the field, and provide leadership in finding solutions and agreed-upon procedures for the future. Several steps in the right direction are already being taken, most particularly by the efforts of the University Center for Educational Administration and related groups in establishing the current National Commission for Excellence in Educational Administration. All of us, however, must be prepared to carry the messages developed by such deliberation to other constituencies, such as the special committee of the National Conference of Governors which is studying the field of educational leadership.

More than anything else, however, we must all be willing to entertain new ideas and experiment with new ways of preparing school administrators for a changing world. It is not enough to simply acknowledge that educational leaders must be flexible, must be able to work in a complex environment, must be problem-solvers, and must have a firm basis in and

commitment to human and educational values. If we truly believe such things, we must be prepared to alter our preparation procedures to assure that this and future generations of school administrators are more than adequate to those needs. David Seeley has pointed to the fact that most of our preparation programs focus some 75 percent of their effort on training managers, on the procedural issues, and only 25 percent of their time on creating leaders, on the ethics, foundations, and challenges of decision-making and leadership influence. He calls for a reversing of these percentages, for a dramatic shift in our priorities (Seeley, 1984). We agree with him.

Indeed, we believe that such a shift is already underway. It is our intention to monitor such changes through future annual surveys, and to share such information with the profession and the public so that we will all be able to gauge our progress and identify those areas in which we must move more expeditiously to meet the needs of our public schools.

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